THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Empowered Group of Minister (EGoM) in its meeting held on 17th August, 2009 decided to reduce the Minimum Export Price (MEP) on Basmati Rice from US$ 1100 per tonne to US $ 900 per tonne. On formal conveyance of the decision, a Notification lowering MEP on basmati rice was issued from the office of Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) on 07th September, 2009.

Incentives to exporters

†1393. DR. RAM PRAKASH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that export is being adversely affected due to rupee becoming steady against the dollar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has formulated any plan to provide incentive to the export companies to tackle the situation; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) The Rupee exchange rate being steady provides stability to Indian exports, and does not adversely affect the exporters.

(c) and (d) Government is closely monitoring the trend in exports growth and export potential, and is reviewing the progress on a continuous basis. Accordingly, need based appropriate measures are taken, keeping in view the financial implications.

Proposal for extending NH in Burdwan district of West Bengal

1394. SHRI R.C. SINGH: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) when the proposal for extending the National Highway in Burdwan district of West Bengal had been taken up; and

(b) the initial estimated cost of the above project;

(c) whether it is a fact that the project is running far behind the schedule;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) the details of cost and time-overrun due to delay in the above project; and

(f) the action taken by Government against the officials and contractors for the above delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI R.P.N. SINGH): (a) The highway from Burdwan to Bolpur was declared as National Highway No. 2B during January 2006, which was further extended up to Mollarpur in November 2008.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) to (e) As the road has not been entrusted to the Public Works Department yet following no-objection from the State Government, the cost estimate etc. are yet to be framed.

(f) Do not arise.

Joint war games by Indian and US armies

1395. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian and US armies have joint war games in the recent past in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the expenditure incurred thereon; and

(d) the extent to which the Indian army has been benefited by such joint war games?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Exercise Yudh Abhyas 09, a joint exercise between Indian and US Armies was held at Babina, India from 12-29 October, 2009. It involved 01 Mechanized Battalion from the Indian Army side and Combat team involving 325 personnel from the US side.

(c) The expenditure incurred for the above exercise is Rs. 64 lakhs.

(d) Such exercises are found to benefit the Indian Army by gaining insights into the psyche, combat readiness, training standards, procedures, and technological capabilities of the US Army besides sharing of experience in the fields of Peace-keeping operations and disaster management.

Diversion of military land to private individuals

1396. SHRI GOVINDRAO WAMANRAO ADIK:

SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether an army land scam involving diversion of military land to private individuals and entities has lately come to light;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to redeem the land and to punish the guilty?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) No, Sir. However, a Court of Inquiry is in progress to investigate the circumstances under which No Objection Certificate was given and a Memorandum of Understanding signed for State land in Chumta Tea Estate in Sukna, Darjeeling.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.